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The BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION :

Its Rise and Meaning

By

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*(Former Plenipotentiary of the Russian People's
Government to Great Britain.)*

THIRD AND ENLARGED EDITION.

With additional chapter, compiled by IVY
LITVINOFF from notes left by her
husband, bringing the record down
to the end of 1918.

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Bolshevik Revolution:

FOREWORD.

The present edition has been prepared by me from notes left by my husband, who intended to bring the narrative up to date and to give a detailed account of the constructive work accomplished by the Soviets. I have confined myself for the present to the narrative of events and to the subject of the Red Terror.

IVY LITVINOFF.

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THE Bolshevik Revolution :

ITS RISE AND MEANING.

I.—The First Revolution (1905).

SOCIALISM IN POWER.

NOVEMBER, 6-7, 1917, will form one of the most momentous dates in modern history ; in those days a Socialist revolution took place in Russia, and the working class, allied with the peasantry, came to power. Because the revolution was accomplished literally overnight without the loss of a single drop of blood, under the eyes of a world which had become accustomed, after three years of universal slaughter, to judge everything from the point of view of its bearing upon the further course of the war, the significance of the event was not at first grasped even by those whom it concerned most closely—the Socialists and the working class of other countries. They who, for a generation and more, had cheered the “Social Revolution” at the close of every propaganda meeting and national and international party congress and had celebrated year after year the memory of the Paris Commune as the great pledge of the future—they, too, failed at first to perceive that that pledge had been realised under their very eyes on a scale incomparably larger than the Commune of Paris, and that the “Social Revolution” was actually upon them. For the revolution in Russia was no mere change of persons or parties at the head of the State ; it was a change of *classes* at the fountain of power and a change of the order of society, both political

and economic. Russia was to be no longer a bourgeois (middle class) democratic republic, after the French or American model, ruled by a Parliament and president, but a *social* republic of the labouring classes, in which the power was wielded, both centrally and locally, by direct delegates of the working class and the peasantry under their immediate and active control in the interests of those classes themselves on the sole principle that labour was the source of all values and that its instruments must be the common property of the people. This was not only a Social, but also a Socialist Revolution, the practical implications of which were to be worked out by the masses themselves under the guidance of the Socialists of the “Bolshevik” school (as the revolutionary wing of the Socialist movement is called in Russia *), to whose foresight, initiative, and courage the Great Change was due.

CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA.

How, it may well be asked, did it all come about ? How, indeed, was such a revolution possible at all in a country so backward, economically and politically, as Russia ? Without wishing to be paradoxical, one may reply that the explanation of this apparent incongruity lies in the very backwardness of Russia—in the fact that Russia has not been able to produce a proper capitalist order, with a powerful capitalist class, such as in other countries has long been in possession of the machinery of the State, has reorganised it on settled democratic and parliamentary lines, and has for generations dominated the minds of the people, including the working class itself. It is just because all these essential conditions of modern “bourgeois” life were lacking in Russia, because the capitalist middle class were so weak as actually to seek shelter under the wings of an antiquated autocratic State system instead of fighting it, and because the working class, and even the peasantry, had not yet

* “Bolshevik” is a bastard word signifying a person belonging to the majority. It was coined after the first split of the Russian Social Democratic party in 1903, when the more moderate wing was left in a minority and the revolutionary wing gained a majority of votes.

succumbed to the bourgeois order of moral and political ideas, that the influence of revolutionary and Socialist ideas among the peoples of Russia became possible, and, in face of the utter contradiction between the requirements of progress and freedom of modern life and the vile, despotic régime of the Autocracy and the landed nobility, indeed, inevitable. More than a generation ago the first Russian Socialist thinkers of the Marxist school had perceived and proclaimed to the astonished world that in Russia a political revolution would, in the absence of a vigorous capitalist middle class, be effected by the working class, or not be effected at all, and the revolution of 1905 fully bore out the prognosis. In that revolution the middle class democracy completely failed in the discharge of the mission which historically had fallen upon it in other countries before, and it was the working class, assisted in an inarticulate fashion by the peasant masses, which carried out the work from start to finish. In fact, if that revolution did not victoriously achieve its aim, it was due to that very failure of the capitalist middle classes—the bourgeoisie, to use the familiar term—who at the critical moment recoiled before the open attack against Tsardom, and, accepting from its hands a wretched sop, renounced all further struggle, and even turned against the working class.

TACTICAL DIFFERENCES AMONG RUSSIAN SOCIALISTS.

But in those early revolutionary days of 1905 the revolutionary front itself was already exhibiting certain lines of cleavage which it is important to note. Two years previously the Social Democratic Party, whose agitation among the industrial masses caused their marvellous quickening in 1905, had split into two sections, one more moderate, the "Mensheviks," and the other more revolutionary and uncompromising, the "Bolsheviks." The former were now arguing that the revolution must be regarded essentially as one similar to those which had preceded it in Europe, that is, as a bourgeois revolution destined to bring the capitalist class to power and to establish a bourgeois State. The latter, on the contrary, were of the opinion that inas-

much as the hegemony in the revolution clearly belonged to the working class, with which the landless peasantry was in alliance, it must and should lead to the establishment of the proletarian rule, and, at least, to a considerable modification of the bourgeois State in a Socialist direction. Trotsky went so far as to assert that that State could be directly established on Socialist lines. Accordingly, the Mensheviks were throughout in favour of a political alliance with the bourgeoisie, especially the so-called Constitutional Democrats ("Cadets," for short), and were opposed to the continuance of the struggle beyond the point accepted by them, as, provisionally or permanently, final. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks demanded that the proletariat should go on with the revolutionary fight, even against the will of the bourgeoisie, so long as it enjoyed the support of the landless peasantry. Hence, when the Tsar issued his famous "Constitutional Manifesto" of October 30th (1905) under the pressure of a general strike and the Liberals accepted it as the end of the struggle, the Mensheviks also laid down their arms, while the Bolsheviks, distrusting the Tsar's promises, organised yet a second general strike and an armed insurrection in Moscow. Their efforts failed to bring about the desired result, viz., the overthrow of the entire Tsardom, root and branch, because of the division in the ranks of the proletariat and the lack of support of that section of the peasantry which formed the standing army; but the divergence of views was fraught with most important consequences.

THE POLICY AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

These showed themselves very soon after the triumph of the counter-revolution and the passing of the first horrors of its gallows. Of course, the "constitution" granted by the Tsar in 1905 duly turned out to be a fraud, as predicted by the Bolsheviks, and so far from helping the bourgeois State in coming into being, as had been expected by the Cadets and the Mensheviks, it entirely subjected the bourgeoisie to the power and influence of the Tsardom. What was to be done next? The Bolsheviks, faithful to their principles, argued that now, as before, the duty of the

Social Democracy was to organise the working class for the revolution, that for that object it must carry on among it a revolutionary and Socialist propaganda, and educate it for collective revolutionary action against the Autocracy. Their opponents, the Mensheviks, disagreed with them. The next revolution, in their opinion, was to be made principally by the bourgeoisie—with the help, it is true, of the working class. The duty of Social Democracy was, they considered, to back every effort of Liberalism to combat the Autocracy in the Duma and elsewhere, and to influence the bourgeoisie in that direction. As for revolutionary agitation among the working class, the Mensheviks held that it was both futile in view of the savage reactionary régime instituted by the counter-revolution, and mischievous because it would automatically transform the Socialist parties into "illegal" subterranean organisations, with conspirative habits and methods, and thus prevent them from becoming the advance guard of a mass-movement of the proletariat such as was witnessed in other countries. They went so far as to argue that a revolutionary movement among the proletariat was, under the obtaining conditions, not only impossible, but would if it were possible, only frighten off the bourgeoisie, as it had done in 1905, and thereby condemn itself to failure.

Again the Bolsheviks proved right. While the Mensheviks were writing articles against the evils of the counter-revolutionary régime on the one hand, and the tactics of the Bolsheviks on the other, the latter were organising and educating the working class, with the result that the year 1910 saw the first political strikes and demonstrations, the next year saw them in greater frequency and on a larger scale, and then the revolutionary wave of the proletarian movement began to rise higher and higher in the shape of political strikes and mass-protests against the evil deeds of the Autocracy until barricades suddenly made their appearance in the streets of Petrograd—on the very day when the fatal order for mobilisation was issued by the Tsar! This is a cardinal fact to remember: *Russia was in the incipient throes of another revolution when the war broke out, and the leaders of that revolution were the Bolsheviks.*

II.—The War.

THE PRE-WAR PLEDGES OF THE SOCIALISTS.

THE war, as is well known, proved the political grave of almost every Socialist party in Europe. Less than two years previously, in November, 1912, in the midst of the first Balkan war, the Socialist International had assembled in Basel, Switzerland, to swear uncompromising hostility to any attempt on the part of the European Governments to create a universal conflict. It issued a Manifesto endorsing in solemn accents the famous War Resolution adopted at the International Socialist Congresses of Stuttgart (1907) and Copenhagen (1910):—

"If war threatens to break out, the working class and its parliamentary representatives in the countries affected are bound, with the support of the unifying activity of the International Socialist Bureau, to do all they can, by employing the means which appear to them most effective, to prevent the outbreak of the war. . . . Should, however, war break out, the Socialists are bound to intervene for its earliest cessation and to make every possible use of the economic and political crisis caused by the war, in order to rouse the people and thus to accelerate the downfall of the domination of Capital."

The resolution had been carefully worded at Stuttgart in order not to give the German police a handle against the German Socialists, but everybody had well understood the meaning of the phrase, "means which appear to them most effective," and of the words, "rouse the people." The Basel Manifesto, indeed, spoke quite plainly when it said:—

"The Congress invites the workers of all countries to oppose the power of the international solidarity of the proletariat to capitalist Imperialism. It warns the ruling classes in all countries against the consequences of the further deterioration of the wretched condition of the masses, as caused by the capitalist mode of

production, by warlike operations, and most urgently and insistently demands the preservation of peace. Let the Governments remember that in the present condition of Europe and in the present temper of the working class they cannot let loose the furies of war without creating a grave danger for themselves. Let them remember that the Franco-Prussian war was followed by the Commune, that the Russo-Japanese war set into motion the revolutionary forces of all the peoples of the Russian Empire.

It is thus plain that in the opinion of the International assembled at Basel the outbreak of a European war would fully justify revolutionary action on the part of the working classes. And lest the clear issue between "capitalist Imperialism" and the "international solidarity of the proletariat" in any future war might be confused by various national and humanitarian watchwords (as we now know has actually happened) the Basel Manifesto, with a truly prophetic insight, proceeded to review in detail the numerous separate conflicts then maturing, in order to expose their true nature. Beginning with Turkey, it said that "the Great Powers had systematically obstructed the course of reforms" in the Ottoman Empire, whereby an intolerable economic and political state of affairs had been brought about there, which the Balkan States "were now trying to exploit in the interests of their respective dynasties and capitalist middle classes." On the other hand, referring to the policy pursued in the Balkans by Austria-Hungary, it spoke of the "attempts made by it against Serbia" with a view to "turning it into a colony of the Danubian Monarchy." Again, it warned against the rivalries of Austria-Hungary and Italy in Albania, who "under the guise of Albania's autonomy," were fighting to draw that country "within their respective spheres of influence." As regards Russia, it observed that "should Tsardom once more come forward as the liberator of the Balkan nations it would only do so in order to make it a pretext for obtaining, by means of a bloody war, the predominance in the Balkans," and urged that "the overthrow of Tsardom must be considered by the entire International as one of its chief

aims." Turning to the other Powers, it denounced in advance any and every armed conflict between them as "a piece of criminal insanity," and the antagonisms between them as "artificial," being due to "policies of conquests" carried on by them in Asia Minor.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE RUSSIAN WORKERS

To all these sentiments and views of the international situation the Socialist parties represented at Basel subscribed with enthusiasm. And the result? As soon as war broke out the overwhelming majority of them sprang to the side of their respective Governments, all pledges were forgotten, and the nationalist watchwords were caught up with extreme avidity. Never had such a sudden and complete collapse of a great movement and a great faith been witnessed in history. And the Russian working classes, the Russian Socialists? Alone among the labouring masses of Europe those of Russia received the mobilisation order and the news of the outbreak of war with undisguised hostility and with a clear insight into the hidden imperialist springs of the conflict. For several days, in spite of the large inroads made in their ranks by the mobilisation of the army, the revolutionary working class of Petrograd kept up an attitude of menacing expectancy, in the hope that their brethren in Germany and Austria, as well as in France and Great Britain, would support them. Alas, the support was not forthcoming. On the contrary, the Socialists in the West were voting the war credits and proclaiming a national truce with the capitalists! In Russia itself the collapse of at least one party was also complete; the bulk of the Menshevik leaders—for the most part intellectuals—had gone over, bag and baggage, to the patriotic camp. It is true that the Menshevik leaders in the Duma abstained from voting the war credits; but that was not enough as a battle-cry. It was a manifestation of mistrust, but not an act of protest or a challenge. And the Bolsheviks? To the misfortune of the country, and perhaps to the world at large, all the most notable Bolshevik leaders (as well as most Menshevik-Internationalists) were at that time abroad,

as exiles in various countries. Their voice could not reach the masses, and the latter, seeing themselves abandoned by their fellow-workers in other countries and left without a lead, reluctantly gave up the struggle and surrendered to the inevitable, reinforced as the inevitable was by martial law.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE BOLSHEVIKS.

But though they laid down their arms, the workers of Russia did not surrender their political views, nor, in particular, their views on the war, and did not succumb to the nationalist and patriotic orgy which was let loose in Russia, as elsewhere. The moral and intellectual foundations which had been laid in their minds by the Bolsheviks were, indeed, "well and truly laid," and on them the Bolsheviks were able to build further, in spite, or rather because, of the war, with the utmost success. For the Bolsheviks, like the Serbian, the Rumanian, and the Italian Socialists, and the tiny fraction of the German Socialist party, which was represented by Liebknecht, Mehring, Klara Zetkin, and others, remained true to their Socialist principles and to the policy laid down in the Basel Manifesto; and immediately proclaimed their unalterable and implacable opposition to the war. In the first leaflet issued immediately after the outbreak of war the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks put the question fairly and squarely: "Who are our enemies?" and replied:—

"We are robbed by the landlords, we are robbed by the manufacturers, the houseowners, and the tradesmen, we are robbed by the police, we are robbed by the Tsar and his officials. And when we become tired of this robbery, when we want to protect our interests, when we want to proclaim a strike, the police, the soldiers, and the Cossacks are let loose against us, we are attacked, we are thrown into prison, we are deported to Siberia, and we are hunted down like mad dogs. Those are our real enemies. . . . But now they want to mislead us and make us believe that our enemy is the German whom we have never seen in face at all. They want to incite us against the Germans, and

because they require our arms and our fists they sing a song about national unity. Now they are trying to prevail upon us that we should forget all internal strife, that we should all unite in one patriotic gush, that we should renounce our own workers' cause, that we should make *their* cause our own, and that we should conquer fresh lands for their Tsar and their landowners. But shall we, Russian workers, really be so foolish as to take these lying phrases seriously? Shall we really betray our own cause? No. If we must sacrifice our lives, let us do so for our own cause, and not in the interests of the Romanoffs and their landowners. They are placing arms in our hands. Well and good. Let us be men, let us take the arms in order to conquer for the working class new conditions of life."

These and innumerable similar leaflets were issued and circulated secretly among the masses in tens of thousands of copies—first in the capital, and then throughout the length and breadth of the land, at a time when the leaders of the Mensheviks were preaching a war on German "Militarism and Kaiserism" and were making up their old quarrels with Tsardom. Already in November, 1914, the five Bolshevik members of the Duma were arrested, together with Kameneff, one of the closest associates of Lenin, and after a mock trial were, a few months after, deported to Siberia. ^{3 months after war} Abroad Lenin and Zinovieff were carrying on a most energetic and effective agitation against the "Social Patriots" of all countries, sparing neither the German nor the French "majorities," and attacking the similar brood in the Russian ranks, from Plekhanoff, the father of Russian Social Democracy, now turned Jingo, downwards with unabated vigour. Their point of view was throughout: the present war was an Imperialist war; their duty was not only to fight it, but also to endeavour to transform it into a struggle for the emancipation of the working-class; and lest it be said that thereby the country would be endangered, they, the Bolsheviks, did not hesitate to proclaim: "We are Russians, and for that very reason we want Tsardom to be defeated." Their faith in the coming revolution was unshakable. In January, 1915, in the height of the suc-

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cesses of the Russian arms, at a time when all Europe was flooded by a sea of Jingo sentiment, when Plekhanoff was preaching a "fight to a finish" against Prussia-Germany, and Vandervelde, President of the International Socialist Bureau, was publicly appealing to the Russian Socialists to make common cause with the Tsar, the central organ of the Bolsheviks was shouting at the top of its voice, so that everybody might hear:—

"Yet it moves. You remember the thunderous awakening of the Russian working class and of the entire Russian democracy after the bloodshed of January 22nd, 1905 ('Bloody Sunday' at Petrograd, which ushered in the first revolution)? A similar thunderous awakening shall be witnessed after the present war, after this world-wide slaughter which has irrigated by human blood the fields extending over thousands of miles along the present battle fronts, which has coloured red scores and hundreds of rivers in France, in Russian Poland, in Serbia, and in Turkey. The hour of settling the accounts will come. The dawn of civil war will begin. Let there be darkness round us at present. Let treachery and cowardice surround us on all—even the least expected—sides. We, on our part, believe in our old banner."

And when the Russian troops were first defeated, in May, 1915, on the battle-fields of Galicia, when the cry for national unity and for an all-national effort resounded throughout Russia with a redoubled force, and when the Mensheviks, swept off their feet by the new gush of patriotic excitement, though pretending to pursue mysterious revolutionary aims, joined the capitalists in the formation of Munitions Committees, the Bolshevik organ wrote:—

"The military debacle of Tsardom is close upon us. A terrible economic exhaustion is overtaking the country as a result of the present criminal war. The country will not forgive Tsardom all these millions of lives, all this sea of blood, all these oceans of tears. Down with the Tsarist gang! The last card of the Tsar will be beaten. Whomever the Gods wish to destroy

is deprived of his reason. Tsardom recklessly threw itself into this desperate game. But the Nemesis of History is having her own. Already, through the booming of the guns, one can hear the distant funeral bells of the Tsarist Monarchy."

These were prophetic words, because they were dictated by true revolutionary insight; two years later the Tsar's Monarchy was taken to the grave amidst the jubilation of the Russian people and of the world at large.

III.—The Revolution of March, 1917.

THE POLITICAL BANKRUPTCY OF TSARDOM

THE collapse of the Russian front on May 3rd, 1915, under the onslaught of von Mackensen's phalanx sounded, as the Bolshevik organ rightly perceived, the death-knell of Russian Tsardom. It is true, as we saw, that Russia was on the brink of a revolution in the last days of July, 1914. It is also true that after the first revolutionary upheaval of 1905, which had entirely changed the mentality of the Russian people, and, to a large extent, also produced a change in the economic structure of the country, the obsolete form of autocratic Government, forcibly restored with the assistance of the propertied classes, was destined sooner or later to disappear. Nevertheless, it was the war, with its attendant disasters, both at the front and in the rear, which made the inevitable come rather sooner than later, and at the same time ensured its success by spreading among the peasantry and the army the temper which had become alive among the industrial working class on the eve of the war. For those disasters, as even a child could see, were not mere accidents, but, on the contrary, the natural results of the Tsarist system of government, with its corruption, inefficiency, and obstructive influence on the life-processes of the nation. The disasters were caused, in the first place, by a most appalling lack of guns and munitions. Yet scores of millions had been spent on

the equipment of the army during the preceding ten years. What had become of them? They had gone into the pockets of corrupt generals and contractors and had been wasted by incompetent administrators. Who were the army leaders? They were men of the same stamp as those who had lost the war in Manchuria ten years previously. They had, for the most part, attained their high posts through patronage and drawing-room influence, and many of them were downright traitors, as was proved in the case of General Rennenkampf, the hero of the disaster at Tannenberg, and General Sukhomlinoff, the War Minister himself. Again, why did not Russia prove able to supply the deficiencies in munitions herself, as England or Germany did, as soon as they were perceived? Because, for one thing, the higher army administration, uncontrolled by Parliament, concealed the facts from the public, and because, on the other hand, Russia's industrial development had been grievously retarded by the Tsarist régime, which by its exactions for itself, for the big landowners, and for the capitalists, had entirely impoverished the masses and undermined their purchasing power. Above all, why was the country, which had hitherto been one of the principal agricultural countries in Europe, suddenly hurled into the abyss of famine? Because all the able-bodied male population had been recklessly drawn into the army, because the widest scope had been given to speculators and landowners, and because the weak transport system had been criminally allowed to come to complete ruin. All this, in its causes and effects, became clear to the simplest peasant in the country, as well as to the soldier at the front, and Tsardom lost in the eyes of the people whatever moral authority it still possessed. Added to it were the Court scandals associated with the name of Rasputin and other low adventurers, which helped to open the people's eyes as to the true nature of the autocracy. In the end the capitalist middle classes themselves were gradually driven into opposition to the Tsarist régime. After all, it was their State which was being ruined in the war through the incompetency and corruption of that régime, it was their own propertied interests which were likely to suffer if the dis-

content of the masses led to a revolution, and it was their schemes and hopes which were being destroyed by the disasters of the war and the obvious inability of Tsardom to retrieve its fortunes.

THE LIBERAL OPPOSITION TO A REVOLUTION.

Nevertheless it was not the capitalist middle classes who made the revolution. On the contrary, strongly as they detested Tsardom, they still more strongly detested the idea of a revolution, and none other than Miliukoff, the well-known leader of the Russian Liberals, publicly stated in the Duma, in reply to a taunt by the Monarchists, that "rather than organise the country for national defence, if that should help the organisation of the revolutionary forces, he would leave her as she was," that is, defenceless against the Germans. The utmost these classes were prepared to do was to depose the Tsar by means of a secret Palace Revolution, and to put up another in his place who would drive away the Rasputins from the court and surround himself by better men "enjoying the confidence of the nation," that is, Liberals. For such a "revolution" they, indeed, began actively to conspire with certain Grand Dukes and high officers when it became known that the court was intriguing for a separate peace with the enemy. But, happily, the masses of the people, acting spontaneously, forestalled them. They looked at the situation from quite a different point of view. They did not want to save the State of the Tsar and the capitalists. They did not care a jot for the conquest of Constantinople and Galicia. What they saw was that the Socialists had been right in denouncing the war as an old Imperialist enterprise and predicting from it untold calamities. They saw in the Tsar but a worthy emblem of the war and of the capitalist State, and in striking a blow against him they were intending to strike a blow also for peace, for bread, and for liberty against all forms of exploitation.

THE DOWNFALL OF TSARDOM.

The blow, as is well known, fell on March 12th, and two days later the Tsar was no more. The women of the people,

standing in queues in front of food shops, began the dance which soon developed into skirmishes between the police and the crowds in the streets. Then Cossacks were sent to make use of their whips, but they partly refused to do so and partly were met by soldiers of certain regiments of the Guards who took the part for the people. Street fighting rapidly developed, more and more regiments went over to the people, the arsenals were sacked and their contents distributed among the crowds, and, before anyone was properly aware, the capital was in the hands of the workers and soldiers. In vain did the Liberals send wire after wire to the Tsar, who was then at the front, imploring him to save the situation by dismissing his old advisers and appointing a new Government from their own midst and other persons "enjoying public confidence." While he hesitated and tried this measure and that, the people of Petrograd were acting, seizing one Government institution after the other, and setting up a Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates (Soviet) as a sort of Revolutionary Convention, thereby compelling the Liberals, assembled as an executive committee of the Duma, to establish a Provisional Government and to proclaim the deposition of the Tsar. Of course, the Liberals did not want a republic, and, while deposing the Tsar, they at the same time appointed his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, to succeed him. But the Soviet and the people of Petrograd would not hear of any new Tsar, and the Grand Duke had to sign, simultaneously with the Tsar himself, an act of abdication "pending the meeting of a Constituent Assembly." An attempt was then made by the Liberals to establish at least a military dictatorship, with a view to the further prosecution of the war, under the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolayevitch, the former Generalissimo, but this, too, came to naught. Eventually the Liberals withdrew all opposition to the revolution, which now spread to Moscow and all provincial towns, meeting nowhere with any resistance, but being greeted everywhere with the utmost enthusiasm. Those were, perhaps, the happiest days in the history of Russia.

THE BLUNDERS OF THE SOVIET LEADERS.

But they also contained the germs of all future complications. It must again be borne in mind that at that time there were practically no Bolshevik leaders in Russia, and that most of the Socialists acting in Petrograd belonged to the more opportunist and wholly or partly "patriotic" party of Mensheviks, with just a dash of that moderate wing of the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" (a party of Peasant Socialism and Political Terrorism, at that time small, but destined to grow large in the near future), which under the name of the "Group of Toil," formed a small body of Duma parliamentarians, and counted as its leader Alexander Kerensky, a young enthusiastic barrister, with no political experience. When, therefore, the first Soviet was formed, men like Tchkhaidze, the parliamentary leader of the Mensheviks, and Kerensky became its natural heads, and their followers constituted the main leaven of the new and inexperienced revolutionary organisation. This explains the singular circumstance that though the revolution was made by the working class and the soldier-peasants, and though the actual power was concentrated in their hands, the Soviet allowed the exercise of that power to pass into the hands of the propertied classes, as represented by the Provisional Government which had been appointed by the committee of the Duma. That Government had at its head a Prince Lvoff, a colourless politician of the moderate Liberal school, and included, along with a number of "Cadets," Miliukoff, the Imperialist Liberal, as Foreign Secretary, and Gutchkoff, a gentleman of the same type belonging to the rich manufacturing and financial bourgeoisie, as Minister of War. Kerensky, who had never been a revolutionary and who had no authority among the masses, was the only representative of the new democracy in the Government, having joined it on his own initiative, though subsequently allowed to remain there by the Soviet. Tchkhaidze himself, who was President of the Soviet, though invited to take a seat in the Cabinet, wisely declined to do so, being opposed to any coalition with the bourgeoisie. Such an opposition was perfectly correct, but one may ask, was it at all necessary that a bourgeois Government should come into existence?

Was it at all necessary that the proletariat should abdicate its power in favour of a class which had been opposed to the revolution and which was well known to entertain totally different views on the war from those held by the great masses of the people? The action of the Soviet in shrinking from the assumption of Government power by itself at a time when it was omnipotent and the bourgeoisie was "simply nowhere" constituted a disastrous blunder that can only be explained by the Menshevik infatuation with their dogma that the revolution was and must remain a "bourgeois" one.

IV—Anti-Bolshevism in Ascendancy

THE POSITION OF THE BOLSHEVIKS.

THE first act of the victorious revolution—the establishment of a Provisional Government—took place, as mentioned, in the absence of all the most authoritative leaders of Bolshevism; but no sooner did the first of them, Kameneff, return from his Siberian exile, than the Bolsheviks took up an attitude of definite opposition to the action of the Soviet leaders in depriving the proletariat of all real power and transferring all Government authority to the capitalist middle class. Towards the end of April the other leaders of Bolshevism, with Lenin at their head, returned from abroad. The political atmosphere had by that time already become considerably heated owing to the Bolshevik agitation in favour of the assumption of Government power by the Soviet itself, and the counter-agitation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in favour of allowing the bourgeoisie to carry out the programme of the Revolution—peace, land reform, democratic reconstruction, the summoning of the Constituent Assembly, etc.—in its own bourgeois fashion. When, therefore, Lenin and his friends (including, it must be noted, a considerable number of Mensheviks of the Internationalist wing, under Martoff) on being prevented by the Governments of France and Great Britain from choosing the ordinary route from Switzerland, made their way home through German territory in closed

carriages (in accordance with arrangements made by Swiss Socialist leaders with the German Government), a howl of well-simulated execration arose in the bourgeois Press, having for its object to discredit Bolshevism and its policy in the eyes of the masses. Lenin and his friends were represented as agents, or at least favourites, of the German Government, and their advocacy of the transfer of Government authority to the Soviets was denounced as a manoeuvre to split the forces of the revolution for the benefit of the crafty enemy. The campaign, no doubt, had considerable success, and the position of the official Soviet leaders was immensely strengthened, to the great joy of the Cadets and other political parties of the capitalist bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks continued their campaign with ever-increasing vigour. In this connection the position taken up by Lenin personally deserves to be noted. As soon as he arrived, he submitted a new programme to his party and the people at large, of which the main plank was that Russia must become not a bourgeois democratic, and, therefore, not a parliamentary republic, after the French or American model, but a Soviet republic, that is, a commonwealth in which the central power would belong to a central committee of all the Soviets in the country, and the local government would be carried on by the local Soviets of delegates from the working class and the poorer peasantry, as the sole organs of the State. In other words, the Russian republic was to be a republic in which the proletariat classes would alone exercise authority, to the exclusion of the capitalist and landlord classes and their hangers-on. It would be a Socialist State organisation, pursuing as its ultimate object the expropriation of the propertied classes and the socialisation of the means of production.

This scheme was so bold, in face of the known economic backwardness of the country and the widely spread dogmas of the other Socialists, that Lenin's own closest friends shrank from it and refused to accept it. Lenin was compelled to drop it for a time, expecting that life would in due course prove a more convincing teacher than himself. And life, indeed, brilliantly justified his expectation.

Lenin
Programme
April
1917

THE FALL OF THE IMPERIALISTS.

In the meantime, however, experience bore out the other views of the Bolsheviks. The Soviet, faithfully reflecting the innermost desires of the masses, at once raised the question of peace, and in an historical address to the "Peoples of the World," dated March 27th, laid down the proposition that the present war was an Imperialist war, and that it was the duty, as well as the interest, of the labouring classes everywhere to compel their respective Governments to terminate the struggle by a peace which would involve no annexations and no indemnities, and grant every nation the right to determine its own fate. Under the pressure of the masses the Provisional Government agreed to announce this programme to the people of Russia as its official diplomatic policy, but when it came to its transmission to the Allies, as a preliminary to an invitation to revise their war aims in accordance with its principles, Miliukoff, the leader of the Cadets and Foreign Minister covered it by a note setting forth his own Imperialist war views, and practically inviting the Allies to ignore the democratic programme of the Soviet. This was an illuminating revelation of the innermost mind of the Russian bourgeoisie and a warning to the people as to the dangers which it was running in permitting the capitalist parties to manage the business of government. Again the masses of Petrograd rose, as they had done two months previously; Miliukoff and his bosom friend Gutchkoff were driven from office, and the revolution was confronted with its first crisis.

THE COALITION GOVERNMENT.

Here was a chance of correcting the initial mistake committed by the Soviet leaders. Did the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries learn at last the lesson? Not they! Deeply attached as they were to their dogma that the revolution must be a bourgeois one, they refused once more to proclaim the Soviets as the sole possessors of Government authority, and decided to depute from their own midst four persons (including Tseretelli, one of the most influential and talented Mensheviks, and Tchernoff, the

leader of the Socialist-Revolutionaries) to join the Cabinet, with a view to controlling its policy and actions, and, incidentally, to counteracting the Bolshevik agitation by offering, as it were, security in their own persons for the loyalty of the new Provisional Government.

This was the second, and, if possible, still greater, blunder committed by the non-Bolshevik Socialists, for, having now attached themselves to the principle of a coalition Government as the highest measure, compatible with their postulate as to the rule of the bourgeoisie, which permitted the Soviets to exercise control over the Provisional Government, they henceforth became simple hostages in the hands of the bourgeoisie, whose representatives were now in a position to bring every pressure to bear upon their colleagues, and, indirectly, upon the Soviet dominated by them, by threats of resignation and termination of the precious coalition. The result, indeed, was that all projects of reform, including the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, and the land distribution, were now shelved indefinitely, and instead of working for peace the Government, whose most active member now became Kerensky, the successor of Gutchkoff in the War Office, began now to make active preparations for an offensive, in order, as they said, to make the voice of Russian democracy "weighty," both in the councils of the Allies and in the future negotiations with the enemy.

THE JULY OFFENSIVE.

The masses of the people, who had expected from the revolution the end of all their sorrow, that is, peace, reform, and bread, did not understand this clever diplomacy, and began to listen again to the Bolsheviks, who were now openly opposing the policy of the Provisional Government as counter-revolutionary, tending towards a monarchist restoration, or, at least, a military dictatorship, and denouncing their Socialist opponents as aiders and abettors in the betrayal of the revolution. On July 1st came the new offensive, to end, three weeks after, in a complete rout of the Russian army; but previous to that, on July 16th, the masses of Petrograd again rose in revolt—this time against the Provisional Government as a whole and

the coalition principle in particular—without any lead from the Bolshevik party, but no doubt under the influence of its agitation. This time the rising was unsuccessful in spite of its promising beginning, partly because it had not been organised, but partly also because a mass of forged documents had been secretly set in circulation among the Petrograd troops, “with the connivance of the Government,” showing that Lenin, Trotsky, and other Bolsheviks were in the pay of Germany. The opportunity was a happy one for the bourgeoisie, who were now able to connect the rising with the disaster at the front by representing the former as the cause of the latter, and thereby to create a double diversion by divesting itself of all responsibility for the fiasco of the offensive and by inciting all “true patriots” against the Bolsheviks. A period almost as reactionary as any which had characterised the Tsarist régime now followed. The Bolshevik leaders and their followers were hunted down like wild beasts; Trotsky, Kameneff, Alexandra Kolontay, and hundreds of others were thrown into prison; Lenin and Zinovieff were obliged to seek safety in hiding; the Bolshevik papers were suppressed one after the other—in fact, a veritable orgy of white terror was now set up, with restored death penalty for military offences at the front, and with the final abandonment of all reform and all peace talk.

That was a very critical moment for the revolution, and had it not been for the arrogance and premature haste of the bourgeoisie, which suddenly, without shame, revealed now its cloven foot, the situation might have easily developed into a military dictatorship, with the restoration of the monarchy as its ultimate end. As it was, even the Menshevik leaders and Kerensky (who had in the meanwhile become the head of the Provisional Government) began to feel uneasy at this ostentatious display of reactionary proclivities by the bourgeoisie, and when the latter's candidate for the rôle of Bonaparte, General Korniloff, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, raised the standard of revolt against the Government, demanding the establishment of a Directory, with himself at its head, the revolutionary democracy was at once aroused from its torpor. Korniloff

was crushed by the efforts of the railwaymen, the working men's Red Guards, and the Lettish troops (Bolsheviks to a man), and the Bolshevik party emerged triumphant as the only people who had seen the danger and who were right in their political programme.

THE FALL OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

But, like the proverbial men whom the gods strike with blindness because they want to destroy them, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries could not even now emancipate themselves from the spell of their mischievous doctrines and continued to cling to their dogma about the bourgeois character of the revolution, etc. While the workers and the soldiers were flocking in crowds to the banner of the Bolsheviks, demanding, as the least concession from the official Soviet leaders, the summoning of a congress of all the Soviets of Russia to consider the problems at issue, those leaders found nothing better to do than to call together a mock-democratic congress consisting of delegates from co-operative societies, professional organisations (such as those of medical men, journalists, barristers, civil engineers), municipalities, county councils, and even employers' associations, to “deliberate” upon the situation along with a limited number of representatives from the Soviets and Peasants' Councils. That was equivalent to a direct challenge to the workers' and soldiers' democracy of Russia, and when the precious “democratic” conference, after a good deal of most unscrupulous wirepulling on the part of the old leaders, decided, by a small majority of votes, in favour of the continuance of the Coalition, and elected from its own midst, with the addition of a large number of members from the propertied classes, a “parliament” *pro tem.* to “control” the new Coalition Cabinet. the measure of patience of the masses was filled to overflowing. While that “parliament,” doing honour to its name, spread itself in unlimited and futile talk, of which not even its admirers were taking the slightest notice, the Bolsheviks actively began organising the masses for a new rising, and openly proclaimed in their papers and at innumerable public meetings their intention to lead the

people in an effort to overthrow the Government and the "parliament." Never in previous history had a rising been prepared so openly, so publicly, under the eyes of all the world, as this second, the Bolshevik, revolution. It was a public challenge, as it were, to the Kerenskys, the Tsere-tellis, the Tchernoffs, and the entire bourgeoisie to defend themselves against the coming onslaught. The challenge was laughed at or denounced as criminal, and measures were taken to meet it should it really, by chance, be carried out. But when the night of November 6-7, fixed for the commencement of the operations, came, the whole edifice reared up by the coalition-mongers and their Government and precious bourgeoisie collapsed like a house of cards. Workmen organised in Red Guards and troops commanded by leaders appointed by a Military Revolutionary Committee quietly went round the various Government establishments, such as the central telephone station, the military staff quarters, etc., and took possession of them, and in the course of the following day the Government was arrested, all Petrograd (and then Moscow) was in the hands of the Bolsheviks, a new Government under the title of Council of People's Commissaries was formed, and the great revolution was accomplished without any bloodshed.

V.—The Bolshevik Revolution.

THEIR SUPPORT BY THE MASSES.

In seizing the reins of power the Bolsheviks were obviously playing a game with high stakes. Petrograd had shown itself entirely on their side. To what extent would the masses of the proletariat and the peasant army in the rest of the country support them? The Bolsheviks were not the men to shirk the issue. Though the Central Executive of the Soviets, elected by the Soviets' congress in June, and therefore still dominated by Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, had opposed the idea of a new congress, on the initiative of, and under pressure from, the Bolsheviks, one had been summoned, in a legal way, by the Central Executive Committee, to meet at Petrograd on

November 7th, that is, on the morrow of the day fixed for the revolution. The composition of the congress fully bore out the expectations of the Bolsheviks and allayed the fears of those among them who were inclined to doubt the appropriateness of the time chosen for the revolution. Of the 676 delegates who came from all parts of Russia and were elected on a most democratic basis, no fewer than 390 or more than half, were Bolsheviks, 199 were Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Left, 35 were Internationalist Social Democrats, 21 were Ukrainian Social Democrats, and only 51 belonged to the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Right. Before the proper proceedings began, these last-named 51 delegates, perceiving the hopelessness of their position, rose to declare that they would have nothing in common with the "usurpers" and left the congress. The remaining 625 soon found a common basis in their approval of the Bolshevik revolution, drew up a series of resolutions on peace, land, and a number of other important subjects, elected a new central executive committee to act as their standing organ of control and legislation, and approved the formation of a new Government in the form of a Council of People's Commissaries (each standing at the head of a permanent committee charged with the administration of various Ministries), with Lenin as President and Trotsky as Commissioner for Foreign Affairs. The Bolshevik revolution thus received the sanction of the workers and the soldiers united in the Soviets.

THEIR IMMEDIATE MEASURES.

But this was only the first step, and innumerable difficulties at once rose on all sides. The first act of the new Government was immediately to translate the resolutions of the Soviets' Congress into life by means of decrees. One decree was in the form of a formal and official invitation to all belligerent Powers at once to suspend hostilities, to conclude an armistice, and to begin negotiations for peace on the democratic formula drawn up by Russian people after the overthrow of Tsardom. The other transferred all lands hitherto in possession of private landlords, of the Imperial family, of the Church, etc., with the excep-

tion of the small peasant and Cossack, to the peasantry at large, to be administered and distributed for use by peasant committees acting in conjunction with the local Soviets on such a basis that no one should receive more land than he and his family could cultivate efficiently without hired labour or less land than is required for his and his family's needs. A third decree established a control of production by working-class committees supervising all the industrial establishments of their respective localities in conjunction with the local Soviets, and under the supreme control of the Supreme Economic Council, formed by representatives from various people's Commissions. This latter was a measure of combating war-profiteering, speculation, conspiracies of manufacturers against the revolution, and other capitalist practices, as well as the first step towards the taking over of all the means of production by the people. Subsequently to these measures were added a number of others, such as the nationalisation of the banks, the establishment of a Government monopoly in agricultural machinery, and, above all, the transfer of all local authority to the Soviets as the authorised organs of the State.

The three first-named measures had figured in the programmes of all the Russian Socialist parties, and the land measure had actually been "lifted" bodily from the programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. In spite of this, the other Socialist and semi-Socialist parties immediately declared war upon the Bolsheviks. Though the new Government at once made a formal offer to their Socialist opponents to share power with them on the basis of proportional representation, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries refused to have anything to do with them, and demanded their resignation and the formation of a coalition Socialist Government (they no longer spoke of a coalition with the Cadets!) without the Bolsheviks. Even the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, though in the main agreed with the Bolsheviks, at first had not the courage to enter the Council of People's Commissaries, and only did so many weeks later after much hesitation. Neutral bodies, like certain trade unions, attempted several times to mediate

between the Socialist parties, insisting upon a coalition Socialist Government. Each time the Bolsheviks readily assented to the proposal. Each time, however, the attempt broke down because the opponents of the Bolsheviks either demanded the latter's complete self-elimination (the self-elimination, that is, of the strongest political party in the country, which entirely dominated the proletariat and the soldiers) or the withdrawal of the three fundamental decrees, to the substance of which they had themselves been committed both before and after the March revolution. This attitude did not prevent the non-Bolshevik Socialists continuing to hurl at the heads of the opponents the charges of "usurpation" and "little Tsars," which became still more ridiculous after a specially summoned peasant congress had by a great majority approved of the Bolshevik revolution and programme, and charged its own executive committee to join the central executive committee of the Soviets in permanent alliance. Not only, then, the working-class and soldiers now rallied to the Bolshevik banner, but also the bulk of the peasants, and that meant the overwhelming majority of the nation.

That this was really so, and not merely a formality, was soon proved by the easy manner with which the new Government disposed of the various armed rebellions of its opponents. First, Kerensky, at the head of some armed forces, mainly consisting of military cadets, officers, and a few Cossack regiments, moved against Petrograd, and succeeded in penetrating as far as Tsarskoe Selo. Several detachments from the Petrograd garrison and from the newly-formed working-class or "Red" guards sent to meet him sufficed to wreck the attempt completely, so that Kerensky barely escaped with his life in the disguise of a peasant. Immediately after, at Petrograd itself and at Moscow, military cadets, assisted by volunteers from bourgeois classes, raised the standard of rebellion under the auspices of the local city councils (dominated as these were at the time by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and reactionary, monarchist and Cadet organisations.) Owing to the reluctance of the Government to shed blood, the rebels succeeded in capturing

some important positions, such as the central telephone station and the Winter Palace at Petrograd and the Kremlin at Moscow. Then the garrisons and the "Red Guards" came forward, and a series of bloody battles ensued, which resulted in the total defeat of the rebels. At the main headquarters of the army also, at Mohilev, an attempt was made by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, under Tchernoff, to form an anti-Bolshevik Government in order to lead troops against Petrograd. The Commander-in-Chief, Dukhonin, was himself in sympathy with the scheme, and refused to carry out the peace decree of the People's Commissaries. The troops refused to move, arrested Dukhonin and lynched him as a traitor, and the would-be new Government was dead even before it was born. In the south the most formidable rebellion broke out, led by the famous General Kaledin, the chief Ataman of the Don Cossacks, with the assistance of Korniloff, Alexeyeff, and the entire gang of reactionaries and Cadets under Rodzianko, the former President of the Duma, and Miliukoff. The difficulty of coping with it was the greater as the National Council of the Ukraine, the so-called Rada, which consisted of the same type of politicians as the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Cadets, being also hostile to the Bolsheviks, suddenly proclaimed "neutrality" and refused to allow troops and Red Guards sent from the North against Kaledin to pass through their territory. For several weeks the Kaledin rebellion loomed very large, but ultimately his own Cossacks went over to the Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian people on their part disavowed the Rada and allowed several Bolshevik regiments to pass to the Don. The rebellion was soon crushed, the chief centres of the Don districts were captured, and Kaledin himself committed suicide. A similar fate befell the rebellion of Dutoff, the Ataman of the Cossacks of Orenburg district. In distant Siberia, too, an anti-Bolshevik Government was formed under the leadership of local Cadets and Socialist-Revolutionaries, but its life was short-lived, being overthrown by the local Soviets and Red Guards. In short, everywhere the Bolsheviks triumphed against their enemies with the help of the masses of the people—the workers,

soldiers, and peasants. Neither the Tsar nor Kerensky ever enjoyed such active and unanimous support on the part of the masses of the people throughout the vast country, and it was almost tragic to hear how, in face of these facts, their opponents continued parrot-like to talk of the Bolsheviks as usurpers, as men who represented only a fraction of the nation, and who leaned entirely for support on bayonets.

The truth, of course, is that in the eyes of the bourgeois class, and even its political supporters among the opportunist school of Socialists, the masses of the people, as has ever been the case in history, counted for very little more than fodder for cannons or revolutions, and that the "third estate" loomed as the only true representative class of the nation—nay, as the nation itself. The Miliukoffs and the Rodziankos, the generals, the intellectuals—these were the "nation," although they, together with the whole capitalist and landlord classes, of which they were the standard-bearers, barely constituted 15 per cent. of the population. Hence the Bolsheviks, who, without the active support of the industrial proletariat, the peasant soldiers, and the great mass of peasantry, would not have been able to remain in power a single day, were only "usurpers," demagogues, conspirators, etc., against whom the employment of every form of opposition was legitimate. The attempts to oust them by physical force, that is, by mobilising against them the troops from the front and the Cossacks from the Don, having failed dismally, recourse was had to a universal boycott in the shape of a general strike of all the officials and employees in Government, municipal, and, generally, public services, as well as schools, hospitals, food committees, and of factory and mine owners, including those under contract for the supply of war material. No more ruthless boycott and "sabotage" had ever taken place either in Russia or in any other country. When the great general strike, which brought the Tsarist autocracy to its knees, took place in October, 1905, at least the doctors, the pharmacists, the men employed in the waterworks and such-like public services remained at their post with the express approval,

Strike
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and sometimes even at the direct orders, of the revolutionary leaders. Now it was different. Now the bourgeoisie, with the thorough ruthlessness which distinguishes all its actions in defence of its class interests against the popular masses, resolved to fight the Bolshevik régime, even though the population in the cities might perish from hunger and disease and the army might be left without the necessities either of defence or sheer existence. And because the Bolshevik Government found itself on that account unable to administer its decrees, and even to obtain from the State and other banks the necessary means of paying the lower officials and the Government workers (who throughout had remained at their posts in spite of all the intimidation practised against them), the bourgeoisie and its Press myrmidons had the additional impudence to deride the Bolsheviks for their impotence, and even to argue therefrom that they did not represent the country.

THE ALLEGATIONS OF "VIOLENCE."

It was natural that the Government should, in these circumstances, have recourse to methods of constraint and restraint. Some of the worst boycotters among the higher officials were either put into prison or had their bread cards taken away from them. Others were simply dismissed and deprived of their right to pension. Manufacturers and bankers who took part in the general economic "sabotage" were also arrested and their businesses taken away and confiscated for the benefit of the State, to be run directly by the Government. Arrest and imprisonment, with a view to trial by revolutionary courts, were further inflicted on politicians and bankers who had been discovered carrying on a conspiracy with the rebel Cossack generals, and a number of papers who had been supporting and even agitating in favour of the bourgeois boycott, including some socialist organs, were suspended, and in a few cases entirely suppressed. All these and similar measures were in the nature not so much of reprisals or punishments as of compulsion to work, for in the overwhelming majority of cases the cessation of the boycott or a pledge to resume work sufficed to restore to the "saboteurs" their freedom and

rights of citizenship. Because Countess Panin, Minister of Public Relief in the last Kerensky Government, refused to deliver the funds of her department to her Bolshevik successor, she was put into prison and kept there until the money was restored to the State; and when Purishkevitch, the notorious reactionary, caught in the midst of a Monarchist conspiracy, was condemned to four years' forced labour on public works he was expressly told that if after one year's confinement in prison he would sign a written pledge to desist from all political agitation the rest of his sentence would be remitted. Altogether, the "violence" practised by the Bolshevik Government even on its most active and implacable opponents has been astonishingly mild; certainly it cannot even be remotely compared, either in degree or extent, with the "terror" of the French Revolution or with that generally practised by bourgeois governments against their enemies. In spite of all provocation, not a single sentence of death has been pronounced by Bolshevik justice, and in point of mere numbers of persons arrested or papers suppressed it will compare very favourably even with Kerensky's régime. Under the latter, hundreds of Bolsheviks and other political opponents languished in Petrograd prisons alone for many long months without ever having had even the charges submitted to them, so that scores of them went on hunger strike; and in the provinces thousands upon thousands, mostly members of the peasant land committees, were imprisoned on the charge of agitating for the immediate assumption of the possession of the land in accordance with the Government's promise. As for sentences of death, hundreds and thousands of them were inflicted and carried out in the case of soldiers and whole units who refused to expose their bare breasts to the machine guns of the Germans, and the death penalty was on the point of being restored even for civilians throughout the country when the Bolshevik revolution occurred.

In face of these facts the cries of Bolshevik "terrorism" which have been resounding ever since from the threats of the saboteurs and their aiders and abettors, who never raised a word of protest against the much more ruthless

régime of reprisals practised under Kerensky, are partly hypocrisy, part of the campaign of slander waged against hated political opponents, and partly the expression of anguish which invariably seizes the bourgeoisie when the fortunes of history make it, for a moment, the anvil instead of the hammer. It was thus that the execution of two reactionary hostages by the Paris Communards sent a "thrill of horror" throughout the capitalist world, while the murder in cold blood of 35,000 men, women and children by grapeshot against the wall of Père Lachaise never for a moment disturbed that world's equanimity.

DISSOLUTION OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The greatest crime imputed to the Bolshevik régime, however, has been the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, which, after many delays under Kerensky's régime, met at last under the auspices of the Bolshevik Government. It may certainly appear as a monstrous crime against democracy on the part of a régime which regards itself as Socialist to have suppressed an institution which had been the dream of generations, which the Bolsheviks themselves had been championing ever since the first revolution of 1905 with more enthusiasm than any other party, and which, moreover, in the present circumstances, seemed to be the only way out of the civil war and civil strife which threatened the country. What better proof could have been furnished that the Bolsheviks were trampling on the people's will in a manner hitherto exhibited by the worst tyrants in history, that they were afraid of the verdict of the nation gathered through its representatives in the highest assembly known to democracy, and that their sole source of power was the bayonets of soldiers and the fists of the working-class? Indeed, had not the composition of the Constituent Assembly on the very first day shown a decided majority against the Bolsheviks, and was not that the circumstance which prompted the Bolsheviks, who had allowed the elections to the Assembly to take place and the Assembly itself to meet, to disperse it?

To those whose order of ideas still clings to traditions of old bourgeois democracy the arguments of the opponents of the Bolsheviks will appear as irrefutable, but a closer examination of the circumstances and a detachment from inherited political measures of value will not show only the inevitableness, but also the intrinsic justification of the violence done by the Bolsheviks to the Constituent Assembly. When Lenin returned to Russia at the end of April he, with his clear foresight of the coming developments, at once proclaimed that the Russian revolution would either assert itself as a Republic of the Soviets, that is, as a Republic in which the supreme power would actually, and not merely on paper, belong to the proletariat and the poorer peasants, or it would not assert itself at all, but would perish at the hands of its own internal enemies. This pronouncement did not find favour even with Lenin's own closest political friends. How could the bourgeois classes be eliminated from power? Was Russia ripe for such a dictatorship of the disinherited masses? Even while fighting for the transfer of all power to the Soviets the leaders of the Bolsheviks were at that time unable to follow out their own train of thought to the end, and imagined, in a more or less confused way, that the exercise of power by the Soviets would only be temporary, that a Constituent Assembly, representing all classes, including the bourgeoisie, would in due course meet and decide in favour of a bourgeois Government, and that then the classes that were organised in the Soviets, that is, the proletariat and the peasantry, would voluntarily step down and allow the bourgeoisie to take their place. It did not enter their minds that the bourgeoisie itself might abdicate its powers by proclaiming a universal boycott of Government authority, or that the proletariat and the peasantry, once possessed of power, might not be willing to restore it to their class enemies. Lenin did not argue with them, but allowed the events to justify his prognostications. He proved right. The revolution was ebbing out, and would have ebbed out entirely had not the Bolshevik revolution helped the Soviets to assert themselves. The Soviets, both centrally and locally, became the State, and their power was confirmed by the universal strike of the bourgeoisie.

What sense was there in allowing a Constituent Assembly to proclaim itself the supreme authority in the State and to supersede the Soviets? None whatsoever. The rule of the Soviets meant the assertion of the revolution and of the working and peasant classes, whereas the rule of the Constituent Assembly would have meant the re-establishment of the rule of those very classes and parties which had nearly ruined the revolution, and which spelt the political and economic subjection of the popular masses. Should revolutionary Social-Democrats have permitted it? Should they have stultified their own action of a few weeks previously? Had they wrested the power from the bourgeois classes and handed it over to the labouring masses in order to wrest it back from the latter and put it again into the hands of their enemies? The very idea of it was absurd. Either one agreed that Russia must, by a striking innovation, establish a new form of State, a State of the labouring masses, and in that case a Constituent Assembly, such as had emerged in all previous bourgeois revolutions, was an absurdity, or a Constituent Assembly was the crown of the revolutionary edifice, and in that case it had been a blunder and a crime on the part of the Bolsheviks to have carried through their Socialist revolution. The Bolsheviks acted logically when they chose the first part of the dilemma; the others were also right in choosing the second part, because they were opposed to the idea of any other than bourgeois rule. One certainly could not with any consistency be an opponent of the bourgeois régime, and yet play off a Constituent Assembly against the Soviets. In fact, the adherents of the Constituent Assembly were, and still are, those who had themselves either opposed or kept delaying it so long as they, while the Kerensky régime lasted, had reason to fear that the popular masses might gain through it undue importance; they became enthusiastic about it only when they saw, after the Bolshevik revolution, that a Constituent Assembly was their sole chance of regaining at least a portion of their old power. Their suddenly awakened sense of democracy was only the expression of their sense of disappointment at losing that last chance.

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, then, meant the final establishment of the rule of the Soviets, that is, of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasant class, pending the reconstruction of society which would do away with classes altogether and admit every citizen of Russia to the full exercise of civic rights. The Bolsheviks may only be blamed for not having foreseen, as their leader Lenin had, the logical implications of their own war-cry, "All power to the Soviets," and for discovering them only when confronted with the accomplished facts of the situation; but that is a blame which has nothing to do with the charges of *coup d'état*, of usurpation, of violence against the principles of democracy which it pleases the Russian and foreign bourgeoisie to hurl at them. The real Constituent Assembly of the proletarian-peasant Republic of the Soviets met a week later, when the All-Russian Congress of the Soviets assembled, and was soon joined by the All-Russian Congress of Peasant Delegates. Both of them endorsed by an overwhelming majority the policy and the actions of the Council of People's Commissioners, and elected a joint Central Executive Committee to represent permanently the labouring masses of the Russian nation, and to act as the supreme legislative and controlling authority. Their political complexion showed better than anything else could that the Constituent Assembly, which contained a majority against the Bolsheviks, had not faithfully reflected the real mind of the people, owing chiefly to the fact that during the elections and the preceding electoral campaign the peasants in the country districts had been as yet unaware of the deep cleavage among the Socialist-Revolutionaries, all of whom talked of the socialisation of the land and of peace, and for whose candidates they voted as if they still were a united party. In the interval between these elections and the meeting of the All-Russian Peasant Congress not only did the cleavage between the "right" and the "left" wings of the party become itself much more pronounced, but, also, the peasants became more clearly aware of it. Had the

Constituent Assembly been elected a couple of months later it would have shown a large majority for the Bolshevik policy.

VI.—The Bolshevik Programme of Peace.

THE NEGOTIATIONS AT BREST-LITOVSK.

It remains to sketch out the Bolshevik programme of peace, which, after all, was the chief plank in their platform, which had gained for them the adhesion of the overwhelming majority of the people. This very fact shows that the real usurpation, the real violence, the real disregard of the principles of democracy were all acts of which those parties had been guilty who for eight months previously had been organising for war, had led the unfortunate masses to slaughter in the July offensive, and had restored the death penalty for acts of insubordination in the army. True to their word, the Bolsheviks, immediately on gaining power, offered peace to all the belligerents, and a specially summoned Congress of the Soviets endorsed the action. The Allies refused the offer, the Germans accepted it. What were the Bolsheviks to do? Were they to repeat the old methods of persuasion and diplomatic talk with the Allies, which had shown themselves so futile during the previous eight months? They went to Brest-Litovsk to negotiate first for an armistice, and next for peace—a general, if the Allies agreed to join them, or separate, if need be. What were their plans? They knew that the military position was against them. The Russian army had been melting away ever since the last months of the Tsarist régime. It had been melting away through wholesale desertion and disease caused by hunger, by lack of munitions and general equipment, and by a complete lack of faith in the Russian and Allied war aims. During the first eight months of the revolution the process had continued at an ever accelerating speed. The disorganisation of the transport, of the supply of raw material and fuel to the industries, and of the food

and clothing supply had proceeded apace, and though the Allies had brought in a considerable quantity of war material, large sectors of the immense front were still lacking in munitions, machine guns, heavy guns, trench props, boots, tents, carts, etc. Above all, the morale of the army deteriorated immensely owing to obvious contradiction between the watchwords of the revolution and the avowed objects of conquests which dominated the war policy of the Allies and which the Kerensky administration was willingly, or unwillingly, helping to attain by further sacrificing the blood and treasure of the Russian people. The desertions and acts of insubordination now became so numerous and so extensive that on one occasion the Minister of War openly admitted that by November there would no longer be any army left in the trenches. The highest naval authority under Kerensky, when offered a post by the Bolsheviks, replied that the only service he could render Russia would be to tell the Allies she could no longer fight. The Bolsheviks could do nothing to remedy the state of affairs, and they went to Brest-Litovsk relying solely upon the revolutionary succour of the working classes of the other belligerent countries—above all, of Germany and Austria-Hungary. It was in order to provoke that succour, that is, to kindle the fire of a revolution in the Central Empires, that Trostky, the head of the Russian peace delegation, tried to prolong the negotiations even after their hopelessness had become apparent, and made those speeches which did more to set the German people in opposition to their bourgeois classes and Junker rulers than all the declarations of the Allied statesmen put together had done in the preceding three and a half years of war. As a matter of fact, a great strike, involving over a million workers, broke out in Germany and previously in Austria, as a demonstration against the now revealed aggressive war aims of the Austro-German generals and diplomats. Had not at that very moment the Allied generals and diplomats assembled at Versailles issued a counterblast, who knows but that those strikes might have turned into a serious revolutionary movement? The same result would have been achieved if the Allies had from the first joined the Bolsheviks at

Treaty - they did not
join in Peace

||| Brest and isolated the Austro-Germans by the acceptance of the Russian formula of peace. As it was, the strike movement came for the present to nothing, and Trotsky was confronted with the dilemma of either capitulating to the Germans completely or of renewing the war. As he would not do the former and as he could not do the latter, he broke off the negotiations, declared that Russia was out of the war, but refused to sign the humiliating terms of peace. He had, however, in reserve in his mind, in accordance with the injunction of Lenin, who from the first had not been hopeful of an immediate revolution in the Central Empires, that he would nevertheless sign the peace if the Germans were either to present him with an ultimatum or denounce the armistice by giving the agreed seven days' notice. The Germans, however, did neither, and with a perfidy not easily matched in military history, immediately broke the armistice and marched against the defenceless and partly demobilised Russians. The rest is known. The Bolshevik gave in and signed the aggravated German conditions of peace.

THE SEPARATE PEACE.

For that, of course, they have again been denounced by their political opponents and by many in the Allied countries, who had mostly before been admiring Trotsky's conduct at Brest. Yet what else could the Bolsheviks have done, with such a terrible legacy as they had received on their hands, in the shape of hunger, lack of every necessity for war, disorganisation of the State machinery, dislocation of the entire transport system, and with all the bourgeois elements against them—especially in the Ukraine, where they had gone so far as to make a separate peace with the Germans and to invite them to march into their country to help them against the Bolsheviks and their own pro-Bolshevik popular masses? A section of the Bolshevik leaders were in favour of repudiating the German terms and of organising a voluntary army of revolutionists to continue the struggle until such time as the proletariat in Germany and Austria had risen. The majority, however, knowing the condition of the Russian

masses better, refused to assume such a responsibility in face of the problematic developments in Germany and Europe at large, and insisted upon the acceptance of the Brest treaty. Their, and, above all, Lenin's argument was that no effective resistance was at the moment possible until the country had been more or less reorganised, that with the Germans in the Ukraine the attempt would be still more hopeless, and that those who were prepared to wait until the rising of the working class in Germany had already been deceived in their expectations when they thought that the Germans would not dare to march against Socialist Russia for fear of their own people. On the other hand, if only they could get a respite, the Russian Socialist Republic would be firmly established and would in due course, even without actual fighting, exercise such a potent influence over the peoples of other countries that the German rule, not only in the territories forcibly separated from Russia, but also in Germany and Austria themselves would be destroyed. This view carried the day, and the future will show to what extent it was right.

THE FUTURE.

In the meantime it is certain that if left alone by foreign enemies, the Soviet rule will in no distant future establish a Socialist régime in Russia. Already the masses of the people—more particularly of the peasantry—are learning the work of administration through the Soviets, and the State officials and other public employees, together with the rest of the intellectuals, learning wisdom through hunger, are going back to their old posts in ever-increasing numbers, so that the wheels of the Government machine are already revolving, and the great decrees issued by the People's Commissioners and the Soviets are passing from the "paper" stage into life. Even the most stubborn among the "intellectuals" will soon learn that, after all, the people is a much better master than the capitalist, and that a Socialist régime is likely to render them even more happy than a bourgeois régime. Thereby a new epoch opens in the life of mankind, and though it is hazardous to make prognostications, with two foreign invaders on

Russian territory, and invasion threatened by the "Allies" with the object of restoring power to the bourgeoisie, with all the world, including the greater part of the Socialist world, looking on with undisguised hostility, one may nevertheless venture to say that the Bolshevik revolution, whatever its ultimate fate may be, will remain for all time the greatest source of inspiration to the struggling proletariat of all countries until the triumph of Socialism covers also with eternal glory the Red Flag implanted by Lenin and his friends on November 6-7, 1917.

March, 1918.

On Conspiracy -
 "White" Terrorism -
 "Red" Terrorism -

Supplementary Chapter

By IVY LITVINOFF.

SINCE the above was written a year has elapsed, and much water has flowed in the rivers of Russia and much blood has flowed on her plains. The history of this period is marked by numerous dramatic incidents which, however, are still fresh in public mind and need not be recorded in detail. So far as organised political parties were concerned, the conclusion of the "Peace" of Brest left the Soviet Government in still greater isolation than before. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries withdrew from the Government, though not from the Soviets, and an opposition was formed even within the Bolsheviks' own ranks. The leaders of the Trade Unions, too, were almost to a man opposed to the treaty. Outside Russia's boundaries all the world rose against the Bolsheviks. In the Allied countries Labour, not to speak of the Imperialists, was against them, and even in Germany, which profited by the "Peace" they came in for a good deal of abuse. The majority Socialists, who had to excuse their own treason, argued that by disbanding their troops and by making inflammatory speeches at Brest, the Bolsheviks had brought disaster on themselves, while the Minority Socialists, the "Independents," furious at the easy victory obtained by their Imperialists, blamed the Bolsheviks for their "selfishness." It will redound to the eternal credit of the Soviet Government, and, above all, of Lenin himself, that amidst such a complete political isolation they remained true to the course they had adopted, the course which subsequently proved the right one. Not for a moment did they flinch in their attitude, which was prompted by the expectation that the

"breathing space," as Lenin called it, thus gained, would allow them to carry out a certain amount of constructive work necessary for the material consolidation of the new Socialist régime and at the same time enable them to live while the revolutionary forces unchained everywhere by the war were gathering strength.

In this attitude they were supported by the overwhelming majority of the popular masses in Russia, as evidenced by the resolutions at the Soviet congresses and numerous local Soviets. But in spite of this the parties of opposition, claiming to speak in the name of the Russian people and Russian democracy, broke out in a furious agitation against the Soviet Government, thereby unwittingly creating an atmosphere favourable to counter-revolutionary intrigues and deluding the Allies into believing that any action on their part against the Government and the Soviet régime would meet with the support of the entire opposition and would be greeted with enthusiasm even by the masses of workers and peasants themselves.

COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY INTRIGUES AND THE ALLIED ATTACK.

The result was that the counter-revolutionary forces of Russia began raising their heads, organising armed revolts in various isolated towns or districts, or making clever use, for this purpose, of the Right Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, while the Allies at the same time bought over to their side the Czecho-Slovak prisoners of war, in order, as they said, to prevent Siberia from falling into the hands of the Germans (thousands of miles away), but, in reality, to cut off Soviet Russia from the only source of food supply left her after the German occupation of the Ukraine. The counter-revolutionary outbreaks proved in each case a complete fiasco—not, indeed, so much through the action of the Soviet troops as by reason of the revolts of the local popular masses who were faithful to the Soviet régime. Only in the south-east, among the Cossacks of the Don, Orenburg, Astrakhan, and Kuban, the revolts, led by Tsarist generals, lingered longer and in parts, linger still to

this day, owing partly to the distance from the centre, but chiefly to the very substantial material help in money and war material extended to them first by the Germans and then by the Allies. The direct action of the Allies, through the Czecho-Slovaks, proved more successful for the simple reason that in the absence of local garrisons or even police on the outskirts of the country, any town or district could in those days be captured and maintained in occupation by a well-disciplined armed band. It was in this manner that the Czecho-Slovak troops, deluded by fables that the Bolshevik Government was preparing to deliver them into the hands of its German paymasters, and remunerated at the rate of 200 roubles per head per month (as against 5 roubles previously), were able to get hold of all the chief stations on the Siberian railway and thus to become masters of the narrow, but vitally important, strip of land on either side of the rails from Samara to Vladivostok.

Allied troops were then landed at the last-named place, and a couple of months later, in June, at Murmansk. The landing at Vladivostok was accompanied by the usual assurance of the innocence of the invaders' intentions. That, however, did not prevent them from permitting the arrest and imprisonment of all the prominent local Soviet and Bolshevik leaders by the Czecho-Slovaks and the Russian counter-revolutionaries, from dissolving the local municipality and ordering new elections and, when the elections resulted, to their utmost surprise, in the return of a Bolshevik majority, from proclaiming martial law and quashing the elections. In the case of Murmansk they had recourse to the method of bribing the local leaders by specious promises and hard cash into concluding a "treaty of alliance" with them, whereby the Allies were allowed to land for the protection of the country from the Germans (in this case also hundreds of miles away across impassable marshes and bogs) and undertook to provide them with food, or refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the region, and even to recognise the supreme authority of the Murmansk Soviet. The object of this action, as revealed by the subsequent seizure of Archangel and other places on the White Sea by force of arms, was not so much to threaten

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Petrograd as to try to establish a connection with the Czecho-Slovak front in the east and south-east and thus form a cordon, shutting in the Soviet Republic on all sides. There they still are, presumably waiting for the return of warm weather in order to advance further south and east. The way in which they have respected their pledge not to interfere in the internal affairs of the region is best illustrated by the fact that after capturing Kem they arrested the local Soviet and shot three of its members, and that having set up at Archangel a bogus "native" Government with the renegade Socialist, Tchaykovsky, at its head they have now, through that Government, abolished all the local Soviets, including the one at Murmansk, with which they concluded the original treaty, replacing them by the time-worn Zemstvos. Rumour has it that at the moment of writing the peasants and workers of the region are in revolt, that at least one regiment recruited by the so-called Government has had to be disbanded and punished for mutiny, and that altogether the condition of affairs there is highly critical.

In the meantime the political enemies of the Bolsheviks at home continued their counter-revolutionary intrigues. As the Czecho-Slovaks were capturing city after city from the Volga to Vladivostok, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, sometimes in alliance with the Mensheviks, sometimes with the Cadets, sometimes even with avowed Monarchists and Tsarist officials and generals, were setting up, in the name of the "Constituent Assembly," local and even "central" administrations, giving the latter the pompous names of "All-Russian Governments," suppressing the Soviets, abolishing the decrees of the Soviet Government, and executing and arresting local Soviet leaders by the hundreds. In this way an "All-Russian Government" was formed at Samara, then at Ufa, a second at Omsk, a third at Vladivostok, and so forth, which at first were at loggerheads with one another, and then coalesced into one with its central seat at Omsk, only to be ultimately upset by Admiral Koltchak, who arrested most of its members and proclaimed himself dictator *a la* Bonaparte. And these intrigues and tragic plots were hatched and carried

Soviet Govt. not strong in Siberia

out with the moral and material assistance of the Allies, who had as little compunction in supplying the counter-revolutionaries of all shades and hues with gold as Pitt in his days had when he supported the enemies of the French Revolution outside and inside France.

TERRORIST ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARIES OF THE LEFT.

More honest, but also more foolish, were the Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Left, who by this time—midsummer 1918—had worked themselves up into such a state of nerves over the iniquities of the Brest Peace that no means seemed to them too fantastic or criminal to employ against the Soviet Government and its policy. One fine day, while the highest authority in the country, the Congress of Soviets, was in session, they hatched and successfully carried out a plot to assassinate Mirbach, the German Ambassador. At the same time they effected the arrest of some members of the Government and seized certain public offices, proclaiming the deposition of the Bolsheviks from power and their own accession to office on a programme of war with Germany. They completely missed fire. The German Government, well aware by that time of the dangers which were threatening it, at home and at the front, did not react on the provocation and did not declare war on Russia; while the Bolshevik Government, unlike Kerensky's Government on the memorable days of November 6-7, did not even shake in the saddle, being supported by the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldiers. The conspirators were themselves arrested by the hundred, a number among them, including the authors and direct abettors of the assassination of Mirbach, were executed, and the whole rebellion was wound up within, practically, twenty-four hours.

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This, however, did not end the trouble. Individual assassination now became the order of the day. In the days of Tsardom the Socialist-Revolutionaries used to justify their terrorist methods on the ground that there were no other, more constitutional, ways of removing the

enemies of the people from power. This was a very narrow view to take of what constituted revolutionary action, and was therefore always condemned by the Social Democrats, who were working for a revolution by the people. Still, it had its moral justification in the intolerable sense of injustice and despair on the part of the individual terrorist. But with the masses of the workers and peasants in actual possession of power even that individual justification was gone. The Bolsheviks, in their time, had also been in a helpless minority, but they did not have recourse to forcible methods of removing their political opponents. They worked patiently among the masses, relying upon the ultimate triumph of truth. The Socialist-Revolutionaries apparently had no such confidence in the convincing force of their opinions. They altogether lacked that power to foresee the future trend of events on which alone fruitful political work can be based, which is only supplied by a thorough grasp of Marxist principles of historic materialism. In the case of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, their renewal of the terrorist methods under the Soviet régime was merely a confession of political incompetence and an expression of their despair of ever being able to gain the masses over to their views. The assassination of Mirbach was followed by the assassination of Uritsky, President of the Petrograd Extraordinary Commission for fighting the Counter-Revolution and Speculation, later on of Volodarsky, Petrograd Commissioner for the Press, two highly gifted and devoted leaders of the Bolshevik party, and in between came the attempt to assassinate Lenin himself. And to crown all, as if to show the inter-relation between the enemies of the Soviet régime within and without the country, a vast foreign plot was discovered, in which, it was alleged, the prime movers were no other than the diplomatic representatives of the Allies themselves.

But all these assaults and intrigues broke down miserably against the impregnable walls of the young Soviet régime. All they produced was an intense feeling of bitterness coupled with a stern resolve among the proletariat and the organs of its authority, the Soviets and the Government, to protect their revolutionary acquisitions at all costs. As in

France 120 years previously, so in Soviet Russia, the reply to these combined assaults of domestic and foreign enemies was the Red Terror.

THE RED TERROR.

What is Terror? Is it Terror when the British Government executes scores of Irish rebels and imprisons and keeps in prison for years hundreds of others? Is it Terror when the same Government, in suppressing a revolt among the natives of Ceylon (1915) executes and imprisons hundreds upon hundreds? Is it Terror when the American authorities, in fighting strikers and pacifists during the war, shoots down and imprisons citizens and foreigners by the score? Is it Terror when Venizelos, put into power by foreign bayonets, shoots, imprisons and arraigns before military and other courts scores of political opponents? Is it Terror when Sidonio Paes, having usurped supreme power in Portugal, claps 5,000 Republican opponents into prison? Or does Terror only become Terror when it is employed against friends of existing capitalist Governments and against members of the ruling classes? It would seem so. When, by order of the Tsar, tens of thousands of native men, women and children were massacred and starved to death in Turkestan in 1916 because they had revolted against the illegal order to conscript them for the Russian army, not a word of it was mentioned in the Press until after the Revolution. When the Czecho-Slovaks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries celebrated orgies of blood in Samara, Ufa and countless other towns which they had captured from the local Soviets, the papers only spoke of restoration of "law and order." But when, by order of the Soviets, a Tsarist Minister, caught spinning a counter-revolutionary intrigue is shot, or when the same fate befalls a financier engaged in gigantic and unscrupulous speculations in bread, or when a batch of officers who had accepted service in the Red Army are executed for betraying the troops under their command to the enemy, then, of course, the outcry becomes deafening, and the Press is horror-struck at these acts of Terror. To this day so-called public opinion, that is, the opinion manufactured by the spoon-fed Press, is unable to get over the execution of the

ex-Tsar, and day after day the columns of the British Press are filled with lurid pictures, supplied by "eye-witnesses" and other "reliable travellers," of the scene in the cellar when that great man and benevolent ruler was ruthlessly shot by the savage Bolsheviks. And, not content with discreetly suppressing or glossing over the terrorist deeds of their own and of their friends, and with recording, inflating and expanding the similar deeds of the Bolsheviks, the makers of public opinion, aided and abetted by the official powers that be, add to the record of things that happened things which never happened, killing with their pen again and again persons such as members of the Tsar's family, Tsar's Ministers, Princes, Counts and other grand personages or prominent old revolutionists like Breshkovskaya and Kropotkin, in order, a short time afterwards, to revive and kill them again.

X As a matter of fact, the Soviet régime has been much less sanguinary than any known in history. For the first six and even eight months not a single person was executed, and whatever shedding of blood took place was either in open street fighting with armed rebels, or else due to the uncontrollable, unforeseen and spontaneous action of the crowd. It is true that arrests were constantly going on among plotters or traitors, who were as numerous among the higher old bureaucracy, the higher clergy, the old officers, the financiers and aristocrats as one would expect in the circumstances. But could the Soviet Government—the Government of the overwhelming majority of the people—in its fight for existence amidst universal ruin and starvation, allow plots and treason to be carried out with impunity? What Government, even in so-called democratic countries where government represents only the capitalist minority of the nation, would act otherwise even in conditions of peace and plenty? In point of fact, the imprisonment of the numerous counter-revolutionaries during the first months of the Soviet regime did not have even the character of punishment, but solely that of restraint. When Purishkevitch, the notorious reactionary agitator of the days of Tsardom, was caught conspiring against the new order, he was sentenced by the people's

court to four years' "social seclusion," with "socially-useful" employment on public works, but pending the organising of such works he was ordered to be detained in prison for one year, with the proviso that if by the end of that year he gave a pledge not to engage in conspiracies in future he should be set free! At the same time his accomplice, a young aristocrat, was only sentenced to a "public censure" and to be handed over to his relatives, who were to be responsible for his future behaviour! How the professional judges and public prosecutors laughed at these judgments of the people's court. Again, as a characteristic instance of the treatment meted out to the enemies of the Soviet régime during the first period of its existence, the fact may be mentioned that when General Krasnoff, who had led Kerensky's troops against Petrograd after the Bolshevik revolution, was taken prisoner, he was not shot, or even imprisoned, but was released on his word of honour that he would not again take up arms against the new order. This same Krasnoff, supported by the Allies, is now the leader of the Don Cossacks against the Soviet Government!

In fact, so mild was the repressive policy of the Soviet Government at first, and so completely did it rely upon the righteousness of its cause, that its enemies themselves had nothing but a contemptuous laugh for it. As late as June last year the "Novaya Zhizn," Gorki's then bitterly oppositional paper, wrote:

"Our constructive Communists imagine that whole classes of society can be re-educated by sermons and exhortations and popular speeches at solemn meetings. Implacable foes of all religion and moralisation, who at one time used thoughtlessly to assert that in all morality there is not a vestige of ethics, they have now gone to the other extreme, have become moralists of the worst type, and have turned into a sort of revolutionary parsons."

That is a much better testimony to the character of the Soviet Government's relations to its enemies than the whinings of the counter-revolutionaries and their intellectual helpers and abettors at the frequent arrests and suspensions of various papers guilty of open advocacy of sabotage and rebellion.

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RED TERROR A REPLY TO THE WHITE TERROR.

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The Red Terror may be said to have begun as a reply to the White Terror, to the bestialities committed by the Czecho-Slovaks and their Russian protégés in the beginning of summer, 1918. That has ever been the case in history. In a manifesto issued to "all who toil" the Council of People's Commissioners make known the fact of the loss of the Volga towns and Siberia, as well as the formation of a counter-revolutionary administration at Omsk under the flag of the "All-Russian Constituent Assembly," explain the aim and purpose of the Czecho-Slovak and other risings as that of cutting Soviet Russia off from all supplies of breadstuffs, and order the mobilisation of certain annual contingents in the affected districts. The manifesto proclaims: "It is incumbent upon all Soviets to watch closely the movements of their local bourgeoisie and deal severely with the conspirators." It was then that the practice was first introduced—a practice which, for the rest, has always been employed by capitalist Governments even in "democratic" countries—of shooting rebels captured after the suppression of a revolt and such persons as were discovered to be in communication with Czecho-Slovaks and their friends. But even so this Terror was confined territorially to certain districts and, politically, to actual participants in an armed rebellion. It became extended into a system only after the assassination of Uritsky, the attempt on Lenin, and the discovery of the widely-ramified conspiracy in which the Allied diplomats were said to have been implicated. Organised terror as a means not only of repression, but also of intimidation, then became the order of the day, and numerous enemies of the Soviet régime, from Left Socialist-Revolutionaries down to avowed Monarchists, forfeited their lives. The Extraordinary Commissions above mentioned received wide powers to deal with conspirators and speculators of all kinds, who were sheltering themselves behind the protection of foreign Embassies, in the Army, in the Church, and even in the Soviets and Soviet Institutions, receiving subsidies from abroad, communicating to the Allied troops in the north and Siberia political and military information, receiving and distri-

buting arms to fellow-conspirators, and so forth. The officers, the military cadets, the students from bourgeois classes, and members of the high clergy,* fared badly in this connection. From the beginning of the Red Terror to the middle of October—its worst period—in Petrograd alone more than 6,000 persons were arrested, of whom 800 were shot. These latter included members of a vast conspiracy known as the "League of Salvation of the Country" a monarchist and Black Hundred organisation, and those implicated in the assassination of Uritsky. These figures

* The high clergy and a good portion of the lower, too, constituted one of the strongest props of the Tsarist régime, and are naturally up in arms against the Soviets, which have produced such a revolution in the social psychology of the masses, and have, in addition, taken away the huge estates of the monasteries and churches for the benefit of the people. Almost every counter-revolutionary conspiracy has revealed the reactionary activity of the clergy, and the pupils and confessionals have, in numerous cases, been turned into places of agitation against the new order. Frequently (as in France after the dissolution of the religious congregations in 1905) the clergy have organised armed resistance to the Soviet authorities who have come to make an inventory of the property of the Churches or to requisition the church buildings for educational or charitable purposes. Many a pitched battle has thus been fought within the walls of monasteries and even convents, the rebellious inmates being almost invariably supported by the village bourgeoisie (*kulaks*) against the poorer peasantry who were assisting the Soviet forces. In June last year, in connection with a sordid affair of speculation in real estate, in which several ecclesiastical friends of Patriarch Tikhon were involved, a search was made in the residence of the Patriarch, and a number of highly-incriminating documents were seized. The most interesting was a forged manifesto purporting to come from the non-existing "Central Committee of the Petrograd Department of the Universal Israelite Alliance," which was obviously intended to provoke pogroms, and which expressed joy at the "approach of the hour of victory," when the Jews would be in possession of supreme power and would take their revenge upon the Gentiles: "We shall enslave Russia economically, and will take all her riches. Scores of the sons of Israel are already occupying the highest posts in the State." The Soviet Government mildly punished the Patriarch by confining him to a monastery. Other dignitaries of the Church, including several bishops, paid for similar and even worse offences more dearly: hence the cries which have so moved our own Church dignitaries about the "persecution of the Church," which emanate from bishops and archbishops who have found shelter under the protection of various Koltchaks and the Allies at Odessa and Omsk.

will compare favourably with the number of persons executed by the Czecho-Slovaks, the Koltchaks, and the Krasnoffs, but there is no denying that it would have been better if the Soviet régime could have escaped the necessity of taking so many, and, indeed, any lives at all. But then the provocation was so great and the opponents of the Soviets so unscrupulous and brutal that it would have required something more perfect than ordinary human nature to abstain from paying back the assailants in their own coin. And, in any event, is it for capitalist Governments, with their record, to cry out in horror? This is eminently a case when the Soviet Government can say: Let the assassins commence.

The Terror, unlike that of the French Revolution, was of brief duration, and the Soviet régime emerged from it without any moral hurt. It has crushed the counter-revolution in so far as it is not supported by Allied money and arms, and it has put an end to the sabotage of the former officials and of the "intellectuals." The latter, indeed, having convinced themselves of the strength of the new régime, and realising at last the iniquity and the reactionary tendencies of Allied intervention, have all gone back to their work, even barristers taking up briefs in the new courts, and eminent musicians like Glazounoff setting revolutionary hymns to music. The internal conditions of the existence of the Socialist Republic are assured.

- ① Bolshevik Govt seems to have represented the majority of Russians when it dismissed the out-of-date Constituent Assembly - Jan - March.
- ② Immediately after (for some time longer) Brest Peace Jan 1918 = it may have been in a minority being opposed not only by Cadets but most of the Menshevik & Soc. Revolut. Parties
- ③ After German Armistice Nov. 1918. It again seemed to represent a real majority - it further advanced in power through Allies' stupid policy of supporting the Tsaristic clique of Generals & Politicians beginning in April 1918.

British Socialist Party



CONSTITUTION.

Object.—The object of the Party is the same as that of the Social-Democratic Parties in other countries, viz., the socialisation of the means of production and distribution.

Methods.—The Education of the People in the principles of Socialism.

The closest possible co-operation with trade union organisations and the advocacy of industrial unity of all workers as essential to bring about the socialisation of the means of production.

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